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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY USSR

SUBJECT Volume of Freight Handled by the Merchant Shipping System in the USSR

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1. The shoreline of the USSR extends to over 50,000 kilometers. The maritime borders of the country are two and a half times longer than the land borders. The significance of the maritime borders for communications, especially external communications, is reduced by the severe climatic conditions prevailing on the waters of the Northern Arctic Ocean (except the western part of it), and also by the fact that the USSR has no outlets from the Baltic and the Black Sea. Nevertheless, the sea lanes and maritime transport are of very great importance to the USSR.

2. Short-distance coastal shipping, between ports of one sea to another, is particularly well developed, and during 1940 represented 96% of the total volume of merchant shipping, tonnage-wise.

3. Long-distance coastal shipping between ports of different basins, and overseas trade are of minor significance and in 1940 represented only four per cent of the total volume of merchant shipping, tonnage-wise, although the volume increased somewhat during the post-World War II period.

4. Shipping in the Caspian and Azov-Black Sea basins comprises over 60% of the total volume of Soviet merchant trade.

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